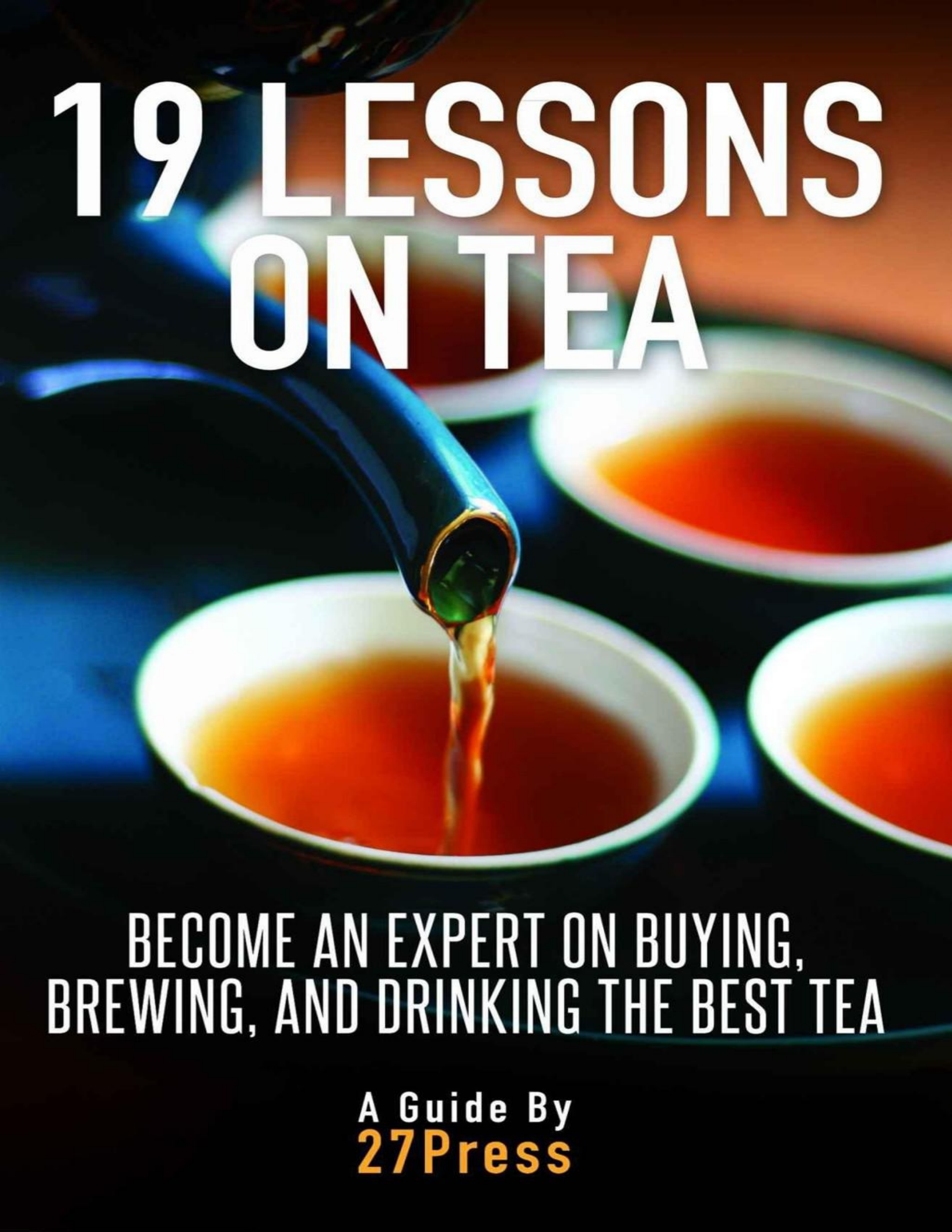
19 LESSONS ON TEA
BECOME AN EXPERT ON BUYING, BREWING, AND DRINKING THE BEST TEA
A Guide By
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Published by 27Press
www.27press.com

First Edition

December, 2012

ISBN-10: 0-9887705-1-2
ISBN-13: 978-0-9887705-1-5

v.0307

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Thank You

I want to extend a special thank you to everyone who helped with this book. Many people provided ideas, comments, edits, and suggestions along the way toward the completion of this project.

A few of those people are listed here in alphabetical order:

Ashley Jarvis
Chris Giddings
Jason Walker
John McConnell
Lori Sandersier
Nicole Martin
Nicolette Boese
Tony Gebely

Thank you for all your help,
David J. Kosmider
Founder, 27Press

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Introduction

Come along inside... We'll see if tea and buns can make the world a better place.
-Kenneth Graham, Writer

Welcome to the world of tea! This book will provide you with comprehensive knowledge on the topic of buying, preparing, brewing (also called steeping), and drinking a variety of teas. Even if you have been drinking tea for years, you will likely pick up several new bits of knowledge along the way to help you enjoy tea even more. We will focus mainly on the different varieties of loose leaf tea, served hot, in this book, but all major types of tea will be covered.

Whether you are drinking tea at home or you happen find yourself in a teahouse on the other side of the world, the knowledge in this book will allow you to confidently enjoy the best teas the world has to offer (and maybe even impress your friends and colleagues with your newfound knowledge of tea along the way). Remember, this book is only the first part of a multi-step learning process. Only experiencing tea for yourself will allow you to truly understand it. Starting out, you should try as many styles and types of tea as you can get your hands on. Many factors such as temperature, brewing time, and additions (such as milk, lemon, and honey) will affect the tea-drinking experience and it is important to determine what you enjoy the most.

If your goal is to become a true tea connoisseur, it will benefit you to keep notes on what you liked or did not like about each tea you try. One of the later lessons in this book is dedicated to taking effective notes on the teas you drink, and if you are reading the paperback version of this book, pages have been provided at the end of this book as a place to keep your notes.

Once you gain more experience, you may decide you like to drink the same type of tea prepared the same way every day, or you may love variety and enjoy taking advantage of the fact that there are endless ways you can enjoy a good cup of tea. When you finish this book, you will be armed with the knowledge to choose what you enjoy the most.

What this book does not provide are ratings of specific teas, information about specific brands or websites, or anything else that could change or become out of date. For that type of information, and to help you continue your tea education after finishing this book, we have prepared an online resource guide where we can keep all the information up to date and continuously add more content for you. In the online resource we provide a glossary of terms, a note-taking

template that you can download and print, a list of our favorite tea websites, additional articles, and much more. Also, don't worry if you see some words in this book that you are not sure how to pronounce; our online resource guide includes a page with links to recordings of people correctly pronouncing words you may not be familiar with (for example, "lapsang souchong").

To access the online resource guide, simply type the following shortened link into your browser's address bar and it will direct you to the page:
27press.com/tea

Enjoy!

Lesson 1
What is Tea?

If you are cold, tea will warm you. If you are too heated, it will cool you. If you are depressed, it will cheer you. If you are excited, it will calm you.
-William Ewart Gladstone, British 19th century Prime Minister

In this book, when we say "tea," we are referring to the beverage made by adding hot water to the dried and processed leaves of the Camellia sinensis plant; either the Camellia sinensis sinensis or Camellia sinensis assamica variety. These two variations of the tea plant are the source of all "true" teas (herbal teas are great too, and are discussed in Lesson 10, but are brewed from different plants). Camellia sinensis sinensis plants are not sensitive to a cold climate, are found in China, and produce tea leaves for up to 100 years. Camellia sinensis assamica plants are grown in India, thrive in a humid climate, and produce tea for only about 40 years.

Tea Cultivation

On a cool morning in the mountains of China, a peasant tea plucker wakes at sunrise to begin her daily task of harvesting tea. She is just one of many pluckers who have gathered in the morning to begin the daily tea harvest. A lingering morning haze protects the delicate leaves of low-lying tea bushes that her experienced hands pass over with care. Only the best quality leaves are acceptable for harvest.

For good quality black or oolong teas, only the bud and the next two leaves are plucked – a process known as "fine plucking," or the "orthodox method." She wears a wide-brimmed hat to shield herself from the intense sunlight. Harvesting is a labor intensive process requiring some skill and our tea plucker moves along slowly and methodically. This is highly repetitive work, but not overly-taxing and she may continue this work until well after turning 60.

Harvesting lower-quality teas means that more and coarser leaves are plucked as well as the bud. This is known as coarse plucking. Sometimes additional, mature leaves are plucked deliberately to prune the bushes, which enable nutrients to be absorbed by newer leaves.

This is a sight that is familiar to many rural areas in India, China, Africa, and other countries around the world where more than 3,000 varieties of tea are grown. It is best grown at higher altitudes, with frequent, regular rain. Mild and

misty mornings are beneficial because they protect the bushes from the burning sun, enabling the plants to develop more slowly. An average tea bush will typically produce about 3,000 tea leaves each year, which becomes approximately one pound of ready-to-brew tea.
Our plucker carefully fills her baskets with the leaves. Once full, baskets are inspected for quality and dispatched to a tea processing factory. Different methods of processing raw tea leaves produce different tea varieties. As soon as they are picked, fresh green tea leaves begin to oxidize and wither if they are not dried. How that process is managed and controlled determines the type and nature of the tea produced.

Plucking by hand is reserved for only high-quality teas these days; modern technology harvests and processes most lower-quality teas now.

Tea Processing

A basic knowledge of tea processing will give you a deeper understanding of the different types of tea and their backgrounds. It also will lend an appreciation of all the work that went into getting those leaves from the plantation to your teapot.

The methods in which the raw green leaves are processed produce at least six distinct types of tea: white, yellow, green, oolong, black and pu-erh. Different varieties of tea come from the same bush or shrub depending on what time of the year the tea leaves are plucked. Tea leaves that are fully oxidized, resulting in a black color, are made into black teas. Most Indian teas are black. Green teas, mostly always from China or Japan, are minimally, if at all, oxidized. This allows the leaves to keep their green color. White teas are also not oxidized and are white instead of green because the fresh buds, not the leaves, are used for tea. Yellow teas are processed only slightly more than green teas, the leaves bruised and allowed to turn yellow to develop a different flavor. Oolong teas are partially oxidized, resulting in a darker green leaf. You will learn more about these teas throughout the book along with how to brew and enjoy them.

At a basic level, the processing of tea involves determining whether or by how much to oxidize raw leaves of the plant before drying them out. When fresh green tea leaves are crushed, bruised, or broken, enzymes within the leaves come into contact with oxygen in the air and oxidize. How much oxidation occurs is determined by the quantity of enzymes which are exposed to the air and how long that exposure lasts.

Oxidation is sometimes referred to as fermentation in the tea industry. They are actually two different processes, but are often used interchangeably.

Oxidation is as described above; fermentation is the process of bacteria feeding off natural sugars in a material (such as tea) and breaking that material down. You will find experts that support either side of this debate; just keep in mind the definition of each.

The processing area of a tea plantation is a bustling place. All of the leaves that are plucked, such as the ones harvested by the Chinese plucker in the previous lesson, make their way to the processing area. Since tea leaves begin to oxidize as soon as they are plucked, leaves may need to be steamed or fired immediately depending on the type of tea being picked. This halts oxidation. The withering process, in which fresh leaves are laid out sparsely by hand in order to prepare them for the steaming or firing and then drying processes, allows moisture to evaporate from the leaves.

Our tea plucker in the mountains of China is working in a relatively humid environment, so heated air must be pumped over the leaves since this climate is not dry enough to wither them naturally.

It is the oxidation process, or the lack thereof, which determines whether the tea ends up as a black tea, a green tea, or an oolong tea. In the case of oolong teas, after withering the leaves are bruised at varying degrees of severity, which determines the taste of the tea. The firing of the leaves is the process of drying the leaves without scorching them. Firing the tea leaves will prevent any further oxidation. They must be carefully placed into heated chambers, and once again the experience of the plantation laborers stands between superior and inferior tea leaves.

Tea's Influence

Tea is the most popular beverage in the world; in fact, only water is consumed more. In the United States, tea is the 6th most popular drink following water, soft drinks, coffee, beer, and milk.

Tea dominates the local economy of many Asian, Indian, and African rural areas. More than 20 of the 33 total provinces in China produce tea, exporting mostly green teas. The economic impact of tea production in these provinces has been staggering. As a region's tea production increases, the relationships with major global tea producers grow stronger. This increases the likelihood of plantations in the province becoming fair trade certified, which benefits the local laborers immensely.

Deals are formed between the purchaser/distributor of tea (for example, any of the major tea brands) and the local plantations for higher purchase prices on the tea. In return for getting more money for their product, the plantations agree to

pay their laborers a fair wage and maintain a high standard of production on all of their teas. This allows the partnering purchaser/distributor to trace product along an exact path back to its origin.

On the downside, some say that these agreements come at a detriment to local plantations that are not able to participate in fairtrade partnerships. Laborers would understandably rather work at fairtrade plantations than at plantations that aren't participating in a fairtrade agreement and therefore getting a lower price for their teas.

Additionally, as with many other types of business regulations, there are often incidents reported of growers not sticking to the fair trade requirements; as such, some teas are labeled fairtrade when they are not, which comes at a cost to both the actual fairtrade plantation owners and the consumer.

Tea History: Naturally, Camellia sinensis plants grow in tropical or subtropical regions in in the form of small trees that are "evergreen" (meaning they produce leaves all year). However, for the purposes of cultivation, they are planted in rows and trimmed to approximately waist height, to allow the leaves to be picked easily by workers.

Lesson 2
Basics of Brewing

I got nasty habits; I take tea at three.
-Mick Jagger, Musician

Now that you know what tea is, where it comes from, and how it's made, we can move on to the exciting part: the basics of brewing a great cup of tea. The below terms will help you make an informed decision the next time you pick up a box of tea.

While there are no worldwide standards for grading teas, they are typically evaluated and labeled in terms of their size and appearance. Tea blends range all the way from dust and fanning, the lowest quality, to 100% buds, the highest quality tea available. The size of the leaf after processing determines how quickly it brews when hot water is added: the smaller the leaf, the faster the brew time.

Knowing how teas are graded informs you about the leaf size (and related brewing time), country of origin, and flavor intensity. Tea grading is often indicated on the packaging, allowing for a more complete understanding of the tea you buy beyond whichever name for the tea that the manufacturer decides on.

Water

Whether you are brewing tea from loose leaves or teabags, there are some basic steps that we recommend you follow. You should always start with fresh water that has a good taste; hard water or water treated with chlorine will affect the taste of your tea, so if the water in your area falls into one of those categories, it should be passed through a filter.

You also should be mindful to use the correct amount of water for the amount of tea you are planning on using. A good rule of thumb is to use about one teaspoon of loose leaf tea or one teabag per cup. Keep in mind that some lighter teas (greens and whites) have delicate taste so you may want to use less water per teaspoon of tea. Similarly, some darker black teas have a strong taste so you may want to use less tea or more water per cup. Experiment and find out what you like best.

The most important "water rule" you need to remember is that different teas require different water temperatures and brewing times. The darker teas, like

black and oolong, generally require higher temperatures and longer brewing times, while the lighter teas, like white and green, require lower temperature water and shorter brewing times. Before you brew your tea, be sure to find out the recommended temperature and duration for the tea you are getting ready to prepare. This information is usually printed on the package.

Also, water reacts best with the tea if there is oxygen in it, so always empty the kettle and refill it with fresh cold water before boiling. Do not re-boil water in the kettle twice.

Milk

For many years there has been a debate about whether you should pour milk into the cup first or whether you should pour in the tea and add the milk second. Traditionally, the milk was added first to prevent the hot tea from cracking cheaper ceramic cups. Today, most cups are more robust, so cracking them isn't a concern.

Many people think that milk mixes into the tea better if it is poured into the cup first. However, others find that it is easier to judge how much milk to put in if it is poured in after the tea. In the end it is entirely a matter of choice. While most black teas are taken with milk, green teas and other lighter teas are usually drunk without milk.

Honey

Honey has many varieties with different flavor notes, making for hundreds of possibilities when it's combined with tea. Tea and honey are also both well-known for their myriad of health benefits; oftentimes, the two are combined to help with ailments from the common cold to lack of energy. Some great combinations are clover honeys with citrus or minty teas, orange blossom honey with black teas, and Tupelo honey with Jasmine tea.

Lemon

Lemon has always been a natural addition to tea as a flavoring agent. A recent study by Purdue University, though, proves that this combination is not only tasty, it's very healthy. Their study was conclusive in finding that lemon and other citrus juices added to green teas facilitated increased time that the antioxidants in the green tea stayed in the digestive system. Citrus juice added to green tea accomplishes this by allowing catechins to remain in the digestive

system longer, which have such healthy properties as reduction in the risks of cancer and stroke.

Brewing with Tea Bags

Bagged teas, most times, contain dust and fanning. These are the very small pieces of tea leaves left over after processing different tea varieties. Because these leaves have been broken or ground into such small pieces, the essential oils have a greater opportunity to evaporate, leaving potential for dry leaves that don't produce a tea with much flavor. However, tea bags are very convenient and a bit less intimidating for the new tea drinker to start working with. They also take the guesswork out of exactly how much tea should go into a cup of water.

If you are brewing a single teabag in a mug, first heat the mug with a small amount of hot water, tip that water out, and then drop in the teabag and add boiling water. Steep your tea for a period of time dependent on the type of tea used, or to taste. Last, add milk, lemon, or honey to taste.

Brewing with Loose Tea

Now, we will discuss an important part of this lesson: how to perfectly brew loose leaf tea. Loose tea generally produces higher quality tea than brewing from tea bags. Because loose teas are often comprised of the whole leaf, the flavor of the tea is smoother. Loose leaf teas allow you to choose a much more specific taste and offer more flexibility regarding the strength of the tea you brew – if you'd like a stronger flavor, simply add more leaves to the teapot.

Also, loose tea may seem more expensive than tea bags until you consider that loose leaves can handle multiple steepings, something you can't do with teabags. After you brew a loose leaf tea, you can keep brewing it over and over as long as you still enjoy the taste. For the darker teas, especially oolong, this could be ten steepings or even more for other varieties; for lighter teas, the leaves can handle at least two or three steepings.

Lesson 13 covers the different types of teapots available. Tea tastes better if it is prepared and brewed in a good teapot that holds heat well. To start the brewing process, fill the pot holding your tea leaves with hot water, then pour that water out. This will warm the pot and rinse the loose leaf tea, getting rid of any dust and priming the leaf to open up for maximum flavor.

At this point, the aroma of the tea will be even stronger, and you should smell the tea before you continue. Your sense of smell is so important to the tasting process because the majority of the sensation we perceive as taste is actually

smell. Your nose can differentiate thousands of molecular combinations while your taste buds are working with six or fewer basic tastes (depending on whose list you're using). Practicing and developing your sense of smell will help you not only enjoy your tea more, but everything else you eat and drink as well.

Next, add the water heated to the proper temperature for the type of tea you are brewing and let it sit for the proper amount of time. Remember, the package your tea came in should have this information and the following lessons will give you some general guidelines. If desired, cover your teapot with a tea cosy to reduce heat loss during the brewing period.

Finally, remove the tea leaves from the water to stop the brewing. You're finished! Pour your tea and enjoy.

Remember, all of these issues on how to brew and what to add or what not to add are matters of personal choice. Experiment and see what you enjoy the most!

The next few lessons will give you specific information on each different major type of tea and some of the popular subtypes. Lessons 3-8 cover the normal Camellia sinensis tea types. In general, they are ordered from least to most processing/oxidation, though each type includes many variations and some variations fall outside the order we have established here.

However, keep in mind that generally, the teas that each of these types produce will progress from lighter to darker (both in color and strength of flavor), and from lower to higher brew temperatures and steep times. The amount of caffeine present in each type of tea follows this same general rule: lower caffeine for lighter teas, higher caffeine for darker teas.

Typical brewing times and water temperatures are given for each major tea type. Remember that these might not be the same for a specific tea variety, so be sure to check your package for instructions.

For additional information on brewing specific teas, including links to convenient charts and timers, please check out our online resource guide at:
27press.com/tea

Tea History: According to legend, tea was discovered in 2737 BCE by Chinese Emperor Shen Nung. The Emperor was sitting under a tree while a servant boiled his drinking water when leaves from a Camellia sinensis tree fell into his cup. Shen Nung, a noted herbalist, tried the beverage and enjoyed the refreshing flavor. Thus, tea was born. Whether this legend is truth or folklore, tea became a mainstay of Chinese life for many centuries and remains the most popular drink in China to this day. Tea containers from the time of the Han Dynasty (206 BCE - 220 CE) have been discovered, and the word for tea first appeared in a Chinese

dictionary in 350 CE.

Lesson 3
White Tea

A woman is like a tea bag – you can't tell how strong she is until you put her in hot water.
-Eleanor Roosevelt, Former First Lady

White tea leaves are plucked much more discriminately than other tea leaves. To begin with, they are only plucked on a few days of the year in the beginning of spring.

Only the top leaves and immature buds are picked, and of that harvest, only perfect specimens make it to the basket – no leaves that are damaged in any way will be sold. After harvesting, leaves are barely processed; it takes an experienced eye and a watchful laborer to steam, and then dry the leaves just enough to allow them to be transported. For all of these reasons, the price of white teas is, on average, much higher than other teas.

White tea leaves are processed the least of any variety of tea, without any rolling or oxidation. Although the leaves and buds are silvery white in color, the tea is a light yellow when it is brewed. White teas have higher levels of antioxidants and lower levels of caffeine than any other type of tea. The silver effect is caused by minute stirrings of new growth in the form of delicate, white hairs on the outside of the tea leaves and buds.

When brewing white tea, be careful not to pour boiling water on the leaves, which are too fragile to handle that kind of heat. Boiling water on white tea leaves will result in a bitter tea. White teas are very subtle in flavor and it is not uncommon for people who are used to stronger teas to think the flavor of white tea is too faint.

Typical Preparation

Temperature: 170-180°F (77°C-82°C)
Time: 3-5 Minutes
Milk/Cream: Never
Honey/Sugar: Never
Lemon: Never

Silver Needle (Bai Hao Yin Zhen)

Silver Needle tea comes from the Fujian Province in China and is regarded as the best of all white teas. It is comprised of only buds and has a very subtle, mildly sweet flavor.

White Peony (Bai Mu Dan)

White Peony tea is considered the second finest white tea from China. This one is made up of buds and leaves, but the leaves are covered in the fine, white hairs that envelope the buds. The flavor is a bit more robust than Silver Needle tea.

Long Life Eyebrow (Shou Mei)

After Silver Needle and White Peony teas are harvested, the remaining white leaves are gathered for Long Life Eyebrow tea. The flavor of Long Life Eyebrow is stronger than White Peony, but still delicate compared to other tea varieties, like black tea.

Tribute Eyebrow (Gong Mei)

The lowest-grade white tea, Tribute Eyebrow is made from a slightly different tea bush than the other three. It is comprised of mostly broken leaves with few, if any buds. The flavor is the most robust of all four of these white teas.

Tea History: Sometimes you will see pricy teas called "Monkey Picked Tea." This name is likely a reference to the high quality of the tea, not the method it was harvested. The name comes from variations on the legend that monkeys used to be trained to pick tea leaves. One variation is that monkeys picked tea that grew at precarious heights too dangerous for people to climb to. Another is that monks would throw things at monkeys to knock them out of tea trees, breaking branches of choice leaves at the top as they fell so that the branches would fall to the ground.

Lesson 4
Green Tea

You can't get a cup of tea big enough or a book long enough to suit me.
-CS Lewis, Writer

Green tea production skips several of the steps that are present in black and/or oolong tea processing. The leaves are usually withered but not rolled. The withering allows most of the moisture to evaporate from the leaves. They are then either steamed or pan-fried to halt oxidation. The process is completed by rolling in a variety of ways and then drying the leaves a final time so that they are still green in color.

The majority of green tea is from either China or Japan. Japan produces a lot of tea, but only a small percentage is exported, so any green tea you drink outside of Japan was probably grown in China. Some of the major variations from both China and Japan are described below.

Typical Preparation

Temperature: 170-180°F (77°C-82°C)
Time: 2-3 Minutes
Milk/Cream: Sometimes
Honey/Sugar: Sometimes
Lemon: Sometimes

Gyokuro

The most expensive Japanese green tea. It is very bright green and takes much longer to prepare for harvest than most tea. It is grown under shade for the last few weeks before harvest to cause a sweeter flavor and unique aroma to develop.

Sencha

The majority of tea produced in Japan is Sencha; made of small and delicate leaves from one of the first two flushes. It is often described as having a "grassy" flavor.

Bancha

Popular in Japan, Bancha is also often recommended and studied for its health benefits. It consists of leaves from an older flushing with a strong flavor.

Matcha

Also known as Maccha, this is a green tea powder popular for its high concentration of antioxidants compared to green leaf tea. Matcha became popular during the Song dynasty in China, but it is no longer quite so prevalent there.

Most Matcha comes from Japan now, and while relatively expensive, this convenient powder is commonly used not only for tea to drink, but also to add the flavor and nutritional benefits of tea to many other food items, such as cookies, cakes, ice cream, and green smoothies.

Gunpowder

Gunpowder tea leaves, like all green tea leaves, are not oxidized. The leaves are rolled into pellets of various sizes and dried out. The name comes from the fact that these pellets look remarkably like blackpowder grains. The tea combines the mildness of honey and the brightness of copper in its flavor.

Dragon Well (Longjing)

Produced in China's Zhejiang Province, this tea is best known for its brilliant emerald green color and full-bodied taste with a flowery essence. It is a superior tea made with just the bud and the first leaf of the plant.

Spring Snail (Biluochun)

Also known as Pi Lo Chun or Spring Snail, this green tea is grown in the Jiangsu Province. Biluochun means, in Chinese, "Green Snail Spring;" as such, the tea leaves are formed into a coil that calls to mind the image of a snail. This extremely popular tea has a flowery scent and tastes of fruit.

Hyson and Young Hyson

These are green teas with longer leaves that are rolled thinly, in older and younger versions respectively.

Imperial

Imperial green teas larger than other varieties and are very loosely rolled.

Huangshan Mao Feng

Grown in the Anhui Province, Huangshan Mao Fen has a light color and a fresh, grass-like flavor. Some detect the taste of apricot in these tea leaves that resemble orchids.

Peaceful Monkey Leader (Taiping Houkui)

Also from the Anhi Province, Tai Ping Hou Kui tea is also known as "Monkey Tea" in China. The tea leaves from these plants are much longer than other green tea leaves. This tea has a light, sweet taste.

Fire Green (Huo Qing)

This tea, also known as Fire Green tea, looks similar to gunpowder tea but is of a superior quality. One bud and two leaves are picked from each branch of the tea bush. It has an arrid, strong taste.

Tea History: Green tea has been used for medicinal purposes for over 4,000 years. Throughout Asia it was considered a medicine and prescribed to help with a variety of different physical problems. Many ancient Chinese and Japanese books have been found that describe how and where people enjoyed tea during different periods in history.

Lesson 5
Yellow Tea

A 'proper tea' is much nicer than a 'very nearly tea,' which is one you forget about afterwards.
-A.A. Milne, Writer

Yellow tea is grown and produced only in China, and not much of it is exported, making it the rarest of the major tea types covered in this book. It is processed in a way that is similar to green teas, but before the leaves are dried, they are allowed to turn yellow. Yellow tea is milder and sweeter than green tea.

Yellow teas should be brewed in much the same fashion as white teas. Boiling water will ruin the delicate taste of the yellow leaves, so be certain that you are using water that has boiled and cooled to about 170 degrees F. Steeping time should be between 1 and 3 minutes, with longer steeping allowed each time you reuse the yellow tea leaves. As far as how much tea you should use per cup, it is really a matter of personal taste, use the information on the package as your starting point and experiment to find out what you like the best.

Typical Preparation

Temperature: 170-180°F (77°C-82°C)
Time: 1-3 Minutes
Milk/Cream: Never
Honey/Sugar: Never
Lemon: Never

Mount Meng Yellow Sprout (Meng Ding Huang Ya)

Mount Meng Yellow Sprout is a delicate, grassy-flavored tea with a nutty aftertaste. It is named after Mount Meng, where it's harvested, and it's considered an Imperial tea, which means that it has a large, loosely rolled leaf.

Mount Jun Silver Needle (Junshan Yinzhen)

Also named after the mountain from which it was harvested, Mount Jun Silver Needle has a very delicate taste and because of its silver appearance, it is sometimes sold as white tea.

Tea History: Yellow tea is also the name for the teas that were served during the rule of China's Imperial Court. The Imperial Court can refer to any period of dominant rule between the Qin Dynasty (221 - 206 BCE) and Yuan Shikai's rule in 1916.Given the high-standard of royal ritual in place during that time, delicate and bright yellow teas were a perfect fit.

Lesson 6
Oolong Tea

There are few hours in life more agreeable than the hour dedicated to the ceremony known as afternoon tea.
-Henry James, Writer

Oolong tea is processed in a similar way to black tea. It is withered and either rolled or shaken. Rolled leaves release oils from the entire leaf; shaken leaves only release oils from their edges. The leaves are only oxidized for about half the time of black teas. When the outer edges of the leaves begin to brown, the veins of the leaves stand out and the center of the leaves turn green. At that time, the leaves are fired to halt oxidation. Oolong leaves are steamed or fired at higher temperatures so that they will stay fresh longer.

Oolong teas are made into in two very different varieties. The darker variety involves bruising the leaves during the rolling process to achieve 60% to 70% oxidation before the leaves are dried. The lighter, greener version involves rolling the leaves in a cloth and then unrolling them to oxidize only slightly. This is repeated several times to ensure that the oxidation process is tightly controlled. Once oxidation has reached around 30% the tea is dried.

Oolongs seem to have the most dedicated devotees in the tea world. Oolong lovers usually drink their tea without milk, honey, or any other additions, and insist that if you must add flavors to your oolong tea, you should be drinking something else. Good oolong tea leaves are the kind most commonly recommended for multiple steepings. While most loose leaf tea is fine to brew multiple times, the flavor profile of the oolong tea actually changes and improves with multiple steepings, with the fourth or fifth often being considered the best.

Typical Preparation

Temperature: 195-205°F (91°C-96°C)
Time: 3-6 Minutes
Milk/Cream: Rarely
Honey/Sugar: Rarely
Lemon: Rarely

Iron Goddess (Tieguanyin)

Sometimes also known as Ti Kuan Yin, this is the most famous oolong tea and is of the lighter green variety. It has a hint of narcissus and hyacinth in its aroma and flavor and is one of the most desired oolong teas in the world.

Big Red Robe (Da Hong Pao)

This Chinese oolong tea is also extremely desired and has a price tag that reflects that. The flavor of this tea is described as fruity and floral, with a bright finish.

Milk Oolong

This is a variety of tea from Taiwan. It does not actually contain milk but has a creamy, rich flavor from the secret, semi-rolled processing of this tea. This is a special and rare type of tea that has many low-quality imitations with fake milk flavoring, so if you buy it, thoroughly research your source or buy from a trusted local shop to be sure you are getting the genuine Taiwanese Milk Oolong.

Tea History: Tea became very popular in France after it was first brought to Europe in the mid-1600's. Many believe that the French were the first to add milk to their tea. The Marquise de la Sabliere, a French noblewoman and poet, added milk to her tea as a matter of personal taste. Soon after, the British adopted this habit as well. Around this time as well, there was a Madame de Sévigné in Paris who wrote a great deal about the Sun King, Louis XIV of France, and his associates' tea drinking habits. Louis XIV was the longest reigning monarch of any major European nation; his reign lasted over 72 years.

Lesson 7
Pu-erh Tea

You know, the men go to tea houses with the expectation that they will have a nice quiet evening and not read about it the next morning in the newspaper.
-Arthur Golden, American writer

Though pu-erh teas have been oxidized to a similar rate as green teas, they are often mistaken for black or other dark teas due to their dark, reddish color. Pu-erh teas are different from the other tea varieties in that they go through a process known as post-fermentation. This simply means that after the leaves are rolled and dried, they are allowed to ferment to develop the flavor.

Tea Bricks were most commonly used during the time of the Ming Dynasty in China. Made of compressed, dried tea leaves, the bricks were used for brewing tea, for consumption and even as a form of currency. Today, teas are typically not made into bricks unless the goal is a post-fermented variety like pu-erh. Pu-erh is formed into many shapes other than bricks, including cakes and disks, bowls or nests, squares, mushrooms, and melons.

Typical Preparation

Temperature: 200-210°F (93°C-99°C)
Time: 3-5 Minutes
Milk/Cream: Sometimes
Honey/Sugar: Rarely
Lemon: Rarely

Raw vs Ripe Pu-erh

Pu-erh is available as unprocessed leaves, which are simply rolled while raw and then dried by the sun; or as a darker, processed variety, which has the additional step of "wet piling," or composting into a tea brick. The value of pu-erh teas increases the longer they are aged; this is true for both raw and processed varieties. Raw pu-erh has a sweet, slightly astringent taste that evolves as the dry tea ages. Processed pu-erh tastes musky, earthy, and rich.

Tea History: Tea bricks have been used since ancient times. These were developed due in large part to the famous Tea Horse Road. Since the Tea Horse

Road spanned many hundreds of miles, tea sellers began to compress their tea into bricks to allow for easier transportation of the tea along the Tea Horse Road. It also allowed buyers to spend more money on their products, since carrying the bricks home with them was easier than carrying loose tea leaves.

Lesson 8
Black Tea

Ecstasy is a glass full of tea and a piece of sugar in the mouth.
-Alexander Pushkin, Russian poet

Producing black tea leaves involves either the orthodox or CTC (crush, tear, curl) method of processing. CTC, a mechanized process, results in the dust and fanning leaves used in teabags while the orthodox method, done by hand or by machine, makes up everything else. The fresh leaves are withered for a number of hours. The leaves are rolled, releasing oils which coat the surface of the still-green leaves.

The leaves are left to oxidize, a process which lasts many hours, transforming the color of the leaves from green to bright copper. When there has been enough oxidation the leaves are heated in special ovens at about 200° F, halting the oxidation process. The leaves are 80% dried in the ovens and the process is completed with the leaves fully dried by placing them above wood fires. By this time the leaves are either black or dark brown. They are then graded according to their size.

The "Orange Pekoe" type of black teas, which includes most black teas from non-Chinese speaking countries, especially from Sri Lanka (still called Ceylon in the tea world) and India, have a well-established grading system. This is made up of a complicated list of about 50 terms and associated acronyms that precisely describe the tea leaf, quality, and origin included in a given package of black tea.

It's not necessary for you to learn this system, but there are a few interesting points about it that you should know. The first is that "orange," in this case, does not have anything to do with the fruit, but was most likely originally a reference to the Dutch Royal House of Orange-Nassau, a group that was important in early commercial efforts to bring tea to Europe.

Also, remember the following terms:

- "tippy," an indication that the tea includes the highest portion of tips, or buds, which are the best quality,
- "flowery," meaning that the tea includes buds and leaves, also a mark of good quality,
- "dust" and "fanning," which are basically the low quality leftovers from tea production and mostly just used for tea bags.

The highest quality grade is Finest Tippy Golden Flowery Orange Pekoe (FTGFOP), also sometimes jokingly referred to as "far too good for ordinary people" among tea connoisseurs.

Typical Preparation

Temperature: 205-210°F (96°C-99°C)
Time: 3-5 Minutes
Milk/Cream: Often
Honey/Sugar: Often
Lemon: Often

Lapsang Souchong

From China, Lapsang Souchong has large leaves and a smoky taste and aroma. Pine wood fires are used in the final drying process, which give it its smoky taste. With some of the lesser-quality Lapsang Souchong teas, some people may find the smokiness overpowering. You can drink it with or without milk.

Darjeeling

Darjeeling is from West Bengal, India and is lighter and more delicate than Assam. In fact, it is sometimes dubbed the "Champagne" of teas. Although classified as a black tea, it is only oxidized to 90%, which makes it technically more of an Oolong tea. It is made from a smaller-leafed Chinese version of the tea plant rather than the larger leaves used in the making of Assam tea.

Darjeeling is produced in multiple flushes, or growing periods, of the tea plant. The first flush is generally light, with a lively flavor and floral aroma. The second flush is not as light, with a stronger, fruitier flavor than the first flush. The second flush produces a Darjeeling that is unique to all other teas for the muscatel flavor present, which is reminiscent of Muscat wines. Leaves from the first flush are more expensive because not as many are plucked and processed. Darjeeling should be enjoyed without milk.

Qi Men Red (Keemun)

Qui Men Red is a popular Chinese black tea that has a woodsy aroma and aged fruit taste. It is best served without milk. Qui Men Red tea became very popular in England in the late 1800s and is the boldest flavor in the English Breakfast tea blend.

Dianhong (Yunnan)

Dianhong is a strong and rich tea similar to Indian Assam tea. Its appearance is different from other black teas in that it includes both leaves and the golden-hued buds. It takes well to the addition of milk and is popular as a breakfast tea. It is fairly new with production in China only beginning in the early 1900's.

Assam

Assam is rich and strong, with a malty flavor. The region of Assam in India has a lower level of rainfall than many other tea-growing regions. This means that the tea bushes grow more slowly, producing a stronger-tasting leaf. Alongside Ceylon (Sri Lankan) and Kenyan teas, Assam is the base tea for the English Breakfast tea blend.

Assam is normally harvested in two flushes (pluckings): one in the spring and one in the summer. The first flush is fresh and bright while the second flush is heavier and richer. It is recommended that Assam teas be enjoyed with milk.

Tea History: In 1833 British Prime Minister Earl Grey repealed the East India Company's monopoly of trade with Chinese products. In 1849 the British government, now committed to free trade, repealed the Navigation Acts allowing future American ships to have access to Chinese tea and British ports. With the tea trade now open, British and American ships began to compete with each other to bring tea from China to London and the United States.

Lesson 9
Iced Tea

American-style iced tea is the perfect drink for a hot, sunny day. It's never really caught on in the UK, probably because the last time we had a hot, sunny day was back in 1957.
-Tom Holt, Comic author

While this book focuses mostly on hot tea, you can use the teas discussed to make iced tea as well. In the United States, 85% of all tea consumed is made into iced tea. Discover your favorite version of iced tea by trying the three methods listed below.

In the United States, iced tea is mostly drunk unsweetened; however in many Southern states it is traditional to sweeten the tea with sugar as the ice is added. Most sweet tea used to be made with green tea but now black tea is more commonly used. Maple syrup and honey are alternative ways to sweeten tea. While the tea is brewing you might try adding spices such as cardamom or cinnamon. You also could make the tea fruity by adding chopped apples, strawberries, mint or cranberry juice.

You can make iced tea with any type of tea that you like, but Darjeeling tea, with its pale gold color and crisp aroma; Ceylon teas, with their rich colors and fresh tastes; and Gunpowder teas, which are light, mild, and refreshing, are all definitely worth trying.

The Hot Method

Prepare a pot of hot tea in the conventional way described in Lesson 2. As soon as the brewing time has passed, strain the tea and allow it to cool. You may store the tea in the refrigerator or pour it over ice. Do not allow tea to steep beyond its normal brewing time to prevent a drink that is murky and bitter.

The Cold Method

Fill a pitcher with two pints of cold water. Add 2-3 teabags or 2-3 teaspoons of tea leaves to the water. Allow to steep overnight in the refrigerator. This is almost guaranteed to produce a clear iced tea. Strain the tea before drinking.

The Sun Method

Begin with the cold method described above, but leave the jug in full sunlight, which enables the tea to brew in the warm air. After 4 hours, strain the tea and chill in the refrigerator overnight.

Tea History: Iced tea was commercially introduced at the 1904 World Fair in St Louis. It was a hot day and Richard Blechynden, India Tea Commissioner and Director of the East Indian Pavilion, noted that his offer of free hot tea was not getting many takers. Blechynden put his brewed Indian tea into a few large bottles and ran the tea through iced pipes. The iced tea was extremely popular with the thirsty visitors to the World Fair. Later, he took the equipment to New York City and offered iced tea to people shopping in Bloomingdale Brothers Department Store where he repeated his success. Iced tea has subsequently become what most American drink when they drink tea.

Lesson 10
Speciality Tea

There is a great deal of poetry and fine sentiment in a chest of tea.
-Ralph Waldo Emerson, poet

In this lesson, we will discuss information on blended, flavored, and other unique tea variations that do not fit into the tea categories previously discussed in this book.

Scented and flavored teas were first used during the time of the Song Dynasty and were reserved for royalty and special occasions. After scented teas became available to the masses, legend has it that people began to scent teas to mask the taste of poorer quality tea. In present day, though, scented teas are sought after and seen as a sub-category of teas to be enjoyed. Scented teas are made by using a standard, green, black or oolong tea and adding flowers, herbs or fruit which has been sliced or peeled.

Adding these "extras" infuse the basic flavor and aroma of the original tea with their essence, which can enhance the experience of the tea drinking. Flavored teas are made by spraying different extracts or flavorings (both natural and artificial) are sprinkled or sprayed over the tea leaves. The leaves are then agitated gently to make sure each one is covered with the flavor.

English Breakfast Tea

English Breakfast Tea is a black tea blend that is very hearty and specially blended to take milk and/or sugar well. The base of this blend is most commonly a mixture of teas of Indian, Ceylon and Kenyan origin. In seeming discord with the name of this blend, Americans were the first to buy and popularize this tea, which was created by an Englishman. You may see "Orange Pekoe" on the label of this blend under major tea companies such as Twinings and Pickwick.

Irish Breakfast Tea

Irish Breakfast Tea is sometimes confused with English Breakfast Tea. The main difference between the two is that the Irish tea blends tend to have a maltier, stronger flavor. That flavor is due to the high concentration of Assam tea in the blend.

Earl Grey

Named after Lord Earl Grey, traditional Earl Grey tea is made from Chinese black tea to which bergamot orange oil has been added. The flavor of the bergamot orange is less bitter than that of lemons, making it popular with many tea drinkers. The tea has a fragrant and smoky flavor and is the favorite beverage of the Captain Jean-Luc Picard character of Star Trek fame. Some tea-drinkers insist that neither milk nor sugar should be added to Earl Grey, but others add one or both.

With such ardent opinions on this popular blend, it's no surprise that there was a minor scandal not too long ago when Twinings changed the formula on their very popular Earl Grey tea.

Russian Caravan

Although the name would lead you to believe otherwise, Russian Caravan is a blended, Chinese tea that is named after the months-long voyage from China to Europe via Russia. It is a sweet, robust blend with a malty flavor made up of Quimen, oolong, and lapsang souchong teas.

Jasmine Tea

Jasmine tea is Chinese green tea to which jasmine flowers have been added. It is thought to have been invented by the Chinese during the time of the Song dynasty (960 - 1279 CE). The Chinese grow jasmine plants at high altitudes and the infusion of fresh jasmine leaves with tea takes many hours. Jasmine tea has a delicate, slightly honeyed aroma and flavor. It is perfect at the end of a good meal. Like most green teas, it should be drunk without milk.

Rose Congou

Rose Congou is a Chinese black tea that is infused with natural oils and scent of rose petals. It produces a rich, dark tea with an aftertaste of rose petals. It is normally served without milk.

Chai

Chai, a word meaning "tea" in many languages, is known as "Masala Chai" in India. This literally means "mixed-spice tea" in Hindi. It is slightly different from a traditional scented tea. With a scented tea such as Jasmine, it is the tea

producer who blends in the flower, oil or essence.

With chai, it is the consumer who does the blending of the extras. Chai is immensely popular in India and its popularity is growing in the West. Making chai involves brewing the tea with a number of spices. The most commonly included spices are cardamom, cinnamon, cloves, and slices of ginger root. Milk and sugar are then added to the spiced tea. The sweetness of sugar is regarded as necessary to draw out the full flavors of the spices.

To make a chai latte, instead of adding milk, use a milk frother, available in most department stores, to foam hot milk and add to the chai tea.

Genmaicha

Sometimes called "popcorn tea" this is a variety of tea that includes roasted brown rice with green tea leaves. Historically, it was created as a cheap tea for the poor and for people fasting for religious reasons. Today there are plenty of higher quality versions of this tea available. The resulting drink typically has a pale yellow color, a mild flavor, and an aroma combining the grassiness typical of green tea and that of the roasted rice.

Kombucha

Kombucha tea is a drink made from what is known as a SCOBY, or a symbiotic colony of bacteria and yeast. Some believe that it has detoxification abilities. Strengthening the immune system, cancer prevention, and improved organ function are a few of the health advantages attributed to the drink by kombucha fans. It is made by mixing sweetened, brewed tea with an "infant" (new) SCOBY.

The SCOBY ferments, feeds off the sugar in the sweetened tea and produces a tangy, effervescent beverage with an acidic, slightly vinegary taste. Due to the fermentation process, trace amounts of alcohol are produced in the Kombucha. This is a popular type for home-brewing enthusiasts, and there is a lot of information available on the internet about how to do this if you are interested in trying.

One caveat: the Japanese drink a tea that, when translated to English, is also known as "kombucha." It is a very different beverage, made with sea kelp. If you are in a Japanese tea shop or in a Japanese-speaking region, you will want to be certain of what you're ordering.

Blooming Teas

Blooming, or flowering, teas are more than just a beverage. They consist of tea leaves wrapped or wound around a dried flower. When hot water is poured over them, the tea leaves unwind and the flower "blooms" in the pot or cup when it slowly opens. Because these types of teas are so intricate and showy, they are best served in clear glassware so that the "flowering" of the tea can be seen.

Some say that these blooming teas originated in ancient Chinese culture. They are typically exported from the Yunnan or Fuijan provinces in China and are also known as "artisan teas."

Bubble Tea

Also sometimes called pearl milk tea or boba milk tea, bubble tea is a cold drink containing small tapioca balls. Usually made with a base of black or green tea, the tea is mixed with fruit or milk, and sometimes blended with ice to form a slushy drink. Bubble tea was first created in Taiwan in the 1980s but has become popular in the United States, Europe, Australia and other countries.

Tea History: Chai tea has a long and storied history. It dates back at least 5,000 years and was invited by an herbalist commissioned by the King of India. The King wanted a beverage with the ability to heal a myriad of illnesses. As described above, the base of chai is black tea, which has antioxidants that can help to heal the body naturally.

Lesson 11
Herbal Tea

Come, let us have some tea and continue to talk about happy things.
-Chaim Potok, American Author

As mentioned early in this book, tea (black tea, green tea, etc.) comes from the Camellia sinensis plant. However, there are many tea-like drinks that are brewed in a similar way to tea but are from the leaves and flowers of plants other than Camellia sinensis.

These drinks are often called herbal teas, or "tisanes" and many people enjoy them, some even preferring them to Camellia sinensis tea. Because herbal tea can come from many different plants, there are a large variety of qualities that these teas can assume. Some are naturally caffeine free and some have antioxidant or mineral profiles different from Camellia sinensis tea, to name a few of these qualities.

For the purposes of this book, we are covering everything that is not Camellia sinensis tea in this lesson, but keep in mind that some of these major varieties, such as Mate and Rooibos, are distinct and popular enough that they would normally be categorized separately from the below types of herbal tea. Also remember that sometimes herbal tea ingredients are mixed with conventional tea leaves to produce a tea that includes infusions of both types of plants.

Below are just a few different types; keep in mind there are literally thousands of combinations and variations available for purchase.

Typical Preparation

It varies widely depending on the type, but most are similar to Black Tea (relatively hot water and fine for adding milk, honey, etc). The package your herbal tea comes in should give clear instructions on this though.

Rooibos

Rooibos tea is named after the South African plant from which it is harvested. In Africa, people drink rooibos tea with milk and/or sugar. Rooibos tea contains more antioxidants than Camellia sinensis tea, and has no caffeine, making it a great option for those that want to enjoy the health benefits of tea while avoiding caffeine consumption. It's also thought to help with anxiety and allergies.

Dutch settlers in Africa began drinking rooibos, as black tea imported from Europe was expensive with unreliable shipping patterns. Focus was put on this plant at the turn of the 20th century by Benjamin Ginsberg, who experimented with different leaf and needle sizes to make the most superior blend. In the last decade, rooibos popularity has spread through Europe and the United States as a health beverage. Rooibos is often combined with other herbs, spices, and dried fruits.

Yerba Mate

Yerba Mate is an herbal tea that originates from a species of the holly bush that is native to South America. Though it's categorized as an herbal tea, the plant it comes from is actually considered a tree.

Yerba Mate has a very strong grassy flavor that is likened to some types of green tea. This is a delicate tea, so be certain when brewing to use hot, not boiling, water. Mate does contain caffeine and is also often combined with other flavors and processed in a variety of different ways. Some mate infusions in South America are traditionally consumed in special gourds with metal straws.

Peppermint

Peppermint tea is often used as a digestive aid, but it has a myriad of other benefits. Freshening bad breath, easing a headache, and calming anxiety are all positive effects of drinking peppermint tea. From the Mentha piperita plant, this tea has a cool, refreshing flavor.

Chamomile

Chamomile tea is brewed with the flowers of the Matricaria recutita plant. Many drink chamomile tea for its calming effect, but chamomile also has several medicinal benefits, for which the flowers of this plant are used. It should be noted that because this plant is related to ragweed, those with allergies to ragweed should not drink chamomile tea. Chamomile tea has a fruity flavor.

Chamomint

As the name suggests, chamomint tea is a blend of chamomile and peppermint teas. This brings together the benefits of each herb: the relaxation that comes with chamomile and the digestive aid that comes with peppermint. This is a tea that is a great choice for an after-dinner beverage, as the mint will help your

body digest what you've eaten and the chamomile will help you to relax and wind down. This tea is very aromatic and has minty, refreshing taste.

Lemongrass

This is an easy one to grow and prepare entirely in your home. Purchase a potted Lemongrass plant or plant some in your garden. Lemongrass is also commonly used in cooking, so you will be able to use your plants for that as well. But when you're in the mood for a simple, fresh, lemony flavored herbal tea, just cut off one of the Lemongrass stalks, remove the outer leaves, chop up the plant, and boil it with water in a pan on your stove. Serve either warm or in ice; it's that simple. Many people also swear by Lemongrass tea as a sleep or digestion aid.

Lavender

Similar to Lemongrass, this is one you can produce completely in your home. Lavender is easy to grow and dry. Then to make lavender tea, simply throw some dried lavender blossoms in hot water and let them steep for a few minutes.

Tea History: The growth of Indian tea coincided with a huge increase in the consumption of tea in Britain. In 1851, when most tea came from China, tea consumption in Britain stood at two pounds per person per year. By 1901, annual British tea consumption had risen to more than six pounds per person. Tea culture is still very strong in Britain, but nowadays the Brits drink just as much coffee as they do tea.

Lesson 12
Buying Tea

Stands the church clock at ten to three? And is there honey still for tea?
-Rupert Brooke, Poet

Buying tea can seem quite a daunting task for a beginner. However, now that you know the basic details about each type of tea, you can use the information in this lesson to start purchasing the best teas.

Make use of your senses when purchasing tea. The first thing you should take note of when evaluating tea is its appearance. When buying loose leaf teas, a good rule of thumb is that the larger the leaf, the better the flavor and quality. Smaller leaves, including the dust and fanning that typically make up what goes into tea bags, tend to have a bitter flavor because they have been cut or torn. High quality whole leaves should have the ability to be handled without breaking or crumbling. After judging the appearance of the tea, you should smell the leaves or bags to assess whether you like the aroma. Keep in mind what we said in Lesson 2 about the smell of the tea leaves.

Of course, it is always preferable to taste your prospective tea purchases before you pay for them. Many tea shops, much like wineries, will allow you to sample different teas before you buy them, either at the shop or via small sample amounts that can be purchased inexpensively to take home to try. If you cannot sample the tea before you buy it, knowing the correct terminology and desired characteristics (grass, fruity, etc.) will help you communicate what you're looking for to the tea shop worker.

Finally, a good recommendation for a complete tea novice is to start off with tea samplers to get to know which types of tea you like best. Once you have an idea of your preferred tea types (green teas, or black teas, for example) you will be able to explore different varieties within those. This is where familiarity with tea labels can be helpful. In Lesson 15, we go over several different styles of tea from major tea producing regions around the world. Tea producers almost always include this information on the label so knowledge of these styles will help you quickly narrow down what teas that you will likely enjoy.

Teas are available in almost every grocery store and are very widely available online. A simple search for "loose leaf tea" on your favorite search engine will bring up hundreds of results for websites that will ship a variety of teas directly to your home. Plus, our online resource guide includes a list that we keep updated on the best places to purchase tea online. Get access at:

27press.com/tea

For your first couple of tea purchases though, we advise finding a good local tea shop so you can evaluate the different teas and ask the shopkeeper questions. Don't be shy about asking questions about the tea of the person behind the counter. If they work in a tea shop, they are probably passionate about tea and are eager to help you find out what you enjoy.

Tea History:

The first known place to purchase and drink tea in Europe was opened at the turn of the 18th century. Thomas Twinings opened a tea house in 1706. Tea houses were more than simply shops – they typically served food and tea, as well as sold different tea blends. Tea houses were known for their quiet, relaxing atmosphere. This first tea house still is open for business in London today.

Lesson 13
Teapots

I was so astonished that I could think of nothing to say, but wondered irrelevantly if I was to be caught with a teapot in my hand on every dramatic occasion.
-Barbara Pym, Author

The enemy of a good cup of tea is premature loss of heat leading to inadequate brewing. All teapots should therefore be reviewed in terms of their ability to stay hot long enough for the type of tea desired. Below is a summary of different types of teapots.

For everyday drinking, you should have a teapot which will provide the amount of tea you want in a single sitting. If you are drinking tea by yourself it is best to use a pot small enough for a single cup. Making a fresh cup each time you want one allows the same quality of tea for every cup.

If you use a large pot to make tea for just one person, the latter cups will become increasingly bitter and lose heat. If you put only enough water in a large pot to make a single cup, then there will be an excessive amount of air in the pot which will have a negative impact on both the temperature of the brew and the flavor.

Stainless Steel

The most popular type of teapot; they are often used in restaurants since they are more robust than other types of teapots and can withstand a fair amount of battering. These pots retain heat fairly well and are a solid choice for most teas.

Bone China or Porcelain

The second most popular teapot, china or porcelain pots are elegant with a large choice of colors, patterns, and designs. They tend to lose heat more quickly, so you may find it best to combine these pots with teas that brew more quickly (i.e., those that brew within 2 to 4 minutes). However, if you use a tea cosy, the right heat for the tea can be extended.

Stoneware or Ceramic

These pots are made with a coarser and heavier type of clay. They retain heat

quite successfully but still benefit from the use of a tea cosy to extend the heat of the pot and the tea. They go well with strong black teas.

Yixing Clay

These are teapots made with clay from the Yixing province of China. They are not glazed and therefore absorb both the aroma and flavor of the teas they brew. If you use these types of pots, you should use one particular type of tea (i.e., one pot for green teas, one for black teas, etc.). Over time, the inside surface will become coated with residue of the tea used. Do not wash them with soap or detergent; use water only and let them dry naturally. They are especially good for teas that have a short brewing time.

Glass

Glass pots are a relatively recent innovation. They work well with most teas and are good for showing off the beautiful color of the tea as it brews, as well as the showy unfurling of more exotic leaves and blooming teas.

Cast Iron

These are most commonly used with Japanese teas. Iron seeps into the tea made with these pots, which becomes a source of iron for the body of the drinker. These pots retain their heat very well, so watch the brewing time to prevent the tea becoming bitter.

Silver

Another very elegant style of teapot, these pots also retain their heat very well. They go well with teas that can take high water temperatures and lengthier brewing times, especially black teas.

Tea History: Historians believe that modern teapots are descendants of bronze or clay wine pots used in Asian and medieval cultures for thousands of years. The oldest teapots that we know of would seem very small to us today, as they were created to brew a single serving of tea and the person brewing typically drank their tea right from the spout of the teapot. As we discussed above, this is the ideal way to drink tea as the flavor is better when fresh water is used and only the amount of tea to be immediately consumed is prepared.

Lesson 14
Tea Accessories

Where there's tea there's hope.
-Arthur W. Pinero, Playwright

Aside from a good teapot, there are a few other accessories listed below which you may want to acquire for a high quality cup of tea.

Kettle

Kettles are small appliances used to boil water quickly. They are ideal for tea-drinkers, both for the speed at which they boil water and their small size, which allows for energy-efficient single-cup brewing. Stovetop kettles are made of metal and typically have a heat-resistant handle and a whistling spout, which goes off when the water inside is boiling. They are heated through placement on a heating element or stovetop.

Electric kettles are typically made of very hard plastic or steel, also with a handle for easier management. They heat water to boiling simply by adding water and plugging the unit in.

Strainer

If loose leaf tea is used, a tea strainer is required to prevent the leaves going into the cup. Strainers that attach to the pot are available; others which fit on a cup or mug and stand-alone strainers, which rest on a stand between cups for multiple pouring, are also available.

Kitchen Thermometer

If you are not using an electric kettle that heats water to a specific temperature, you should consider getting a small kitchen thermometer to make sure your water is always at the right temperature for the tea you are brewing. This is especially important for lighter teas (white, green, and yellow) that have flavors that will be damaged by water that is too hot.

Timer

Don't forget that you will need to accurately time your brewing for a good cup of

tea. A few seconds either way will not make much difference, but following the recommended brew times for a particular tea will generally enhance the quality of your cup of tea. Some people keep small digital timers near their teapot, but that really isn't necessary. Your cellphone, microwave, wristwatch, or any other nearby clock can work just as well. Some people simply count the seconds off in their head while they wait, as a sort of calming ritual to help prepare themselves to enjoy the tea.

Infuser

Infusers are similar to strainers in that they keep most of the loose leaves from getting in the water, but they are made of a much finer mesh and go directly into the teacup. When filling the infuser with loose tea, make sure it is less than half full so the tea can move about freely while brewing.

Tea Ball

Tea Balls, like tea infusers or tea eggs, hold loose-leaf teas to allow for mess-free brewing. They are often made of mesh with an attached chain so the device can be removed from the cup or pot when the tea has brewed to your desired strength.

Storage Container

It is important to put tea in the right type of storage container to retain freshness. The container should have an airtight lid and must be kept away from sunlight. Clear glass is not adequate for tea storage, but you should ensure that your storage container is not porous, as this will affect the tea's flavor.

You should store the tea at room temperature, never in the refrigerator or freezer. Properly stored teas will remain fresh for between 6 and 12 months.

Tea Chests

Tea chests are one type of storage container to hold your teas in style. Typically given as part of high-end gift sets, they are attractive holders for your tea collection. Tea chests are almost always made of polished, stained wood and lined. They are smaller, finished versions of their predecessors; large, rough wooden chests used to ship tea all over the world.

Cup or Mug

There are some people who only drink tea from a good quality bone china cup and saucer. They claim that the tea tastes better from these cups. Alternatively, a large number of people only drink tea from a mug. Another group uses both a cup and saucer or a mug at different times.

For example, you might develop a passion for Jasmine tea (a green tea scented with Jasmine leaves) with breakfast, for which only a good quality bone china cup and saucer will do; but will happily use a mug when taking a cup of tea to bed at night. Green tea in particular benefits from being drunk from a good quality china cup and saucer, or as the Japanese and Chinese do, from stand-alone cups with no handles.

Travel Tea Infusers

Travel tea infusers are great for the tea enthusiast on-the-go. Basically, they are a thermos that includes a built-in strainer for filtering loose tea leaves. The lid is airtight for efficient brewing. They are great because they allow a quality cup of tea anywhere you can get hot water.

Tea Cosy

Tea cosies are excellent for insulating teapots to hold in warmth. They are traditionally made of cloth and sometimes have removable inserts that can be washed and replaced. Tea being a social activity in Britain, the socializing over "afternoon tea" would at times leave the water in the teapot cold. The tea cosy came about around the 1840s, at the height of "high tea's" popularity.

Teabag Squeezers

Great for keeping fingertips clean, teabag squeezers were invented to allow for the delicate squeezing of teabags. Since tea is often served with company, teabag squeezers are helpful for the elegant squeezing of every last drop of deliciousness from a teabag. Some insist that squeezing your teabag will make your cup of tea bitter due to the extra burst of tannins added to your cup. It's a matter of personal preference as far as black tea, and as far as green or white teas (which contain low amounts of tannins) you won't add bitterness to your cup by squeezing every drop out of the tea bag.

Tea History: The tea bag was reportedly invented by a New York City tea merchant in 1908. His name was Thomas Sullivan and he started sending out

samples of his tea in small silken bags. Some of these customers mistakenly thought that the correct procedure was to drop the "tea bag" into hot water. When customers complained that the mesh of the silk bags was too fine, Sullivan responded by putting the tea into sachets created with gauze – the first real tea bags. Very soon, as they gained in popularity, the now-familiar string was attached to the bag to allow its easy removal from the cup. The tea bag has become the dominant way to drink tea throughout the world. Americans were the first to embrace teabags as a means of drinking tea but by the 1970s teabags had become ubiquitous, even in Britain.

Lesson 15
Regions and Rituals

When tea becomes ritual, it takes its place at the heart of our ability to see greatness in small things.
-Muriel Barbery, The Elegance of the Hedgehog

The following is some basic information about the major tea producing and consuming regions of the world. Simply knowing where your tea is produced won't tell you everything because there are so many variations, but it is helpful to know a little about where your tea comes from. Variations in pricing, availability, and quality are often a direct result of where and when the tea is harvested along with other factors such as soil quality, the altitude of the tea bushes, and the frequency of rainfall where the tea is grown.

Knowing how tea is enjoyed around the world will help you when you are traveling. Perhaps you'll even want to take part in a Japanese tea ceremony, or visit an English tea house! This knowledge might give you some ideas that influence your own personal tea ritual.

United Kingdom

The British are known for their love of tea, but in modern times tea consumption has actually been on the decline. However, they remain a major consumer of tea. Traditionally, in U.K., the tea ritual is performed entirely by the host or hostess. Even in homes with servants, the lady or gentleman entertaining guests will personally prepare, serve, and dress the tea for each guest. The British almost always drink tea from a cup and saucer. For more than a century, a British working-class tradition has remained popular in the UK. "High Tea," occurred when the household gathered at 6 pm after work for an evening meal washed down by a pot of strong tea.

Ireland

The Irish are well-known for their beer and whiskey, but did you know that they are also the highest per-capita consumer of tea in Europe? As with many other countries in this book, tea is one of the most popular beverages consumed in Ireland. It is estimated that the Irish drink an average of four cups or more of tea, per person, per day. Irish tea is typically brewed more strongly than other teas;

therefore, the Irish typically add milk and sugar to their tea before offering it to guests.

Germany

Germans follow the "sky, water, land" ritual of drinking their tea. The German tea ritual starts with a white rock candy (also known as kluntje), a sweet, hard confection that is placed in the teacup before any tea is poured in. This represents the land. Then the tea is added, representing the water, and the candy slowly melts, sweetening the beverage. Finally, cream is added, which represents the sky. The Germans prefer not to stir the drink; each layer should be tasted and savored.

United States

Not many people know this, but there are actually some Camellia sinensis tea plantations in the United States, in the states of Hawaii, South Carolina, and Washington. Though the United States is a major tea consumer, most of that tea is iced tea, as discussed in Lesson 11. However, an interest in good quality loose leaf tea has been on the rise in recent years. We're hoping this book will convert a few more people to the cause!

China

People in China have been drinking tea for thousands of years. China produces almost every type of tea discussed in this book, and though teas actually represent a small percentage of their economy, they are the largest producer of tea in the world. In both China and Japan, tea was originally a beverage for the rich. However, during the Mongol invasion and occupation of China in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, tea became a drink for the masses. It was traded along China's famous Tea Horse Road, a 1,000-year-old path stretching from India to Burma, Tibet, and central China. By the time of the collapse of the Mongol empire in the fourteenth century, all tea varieties could be found throughout China.

The Chinese believe that tea-drinking should be a collective ritual. The tea is made in a clay pot. For each guest, the server arranges a narrow cup, positioned in a circle with each cup touching the edge of its neighbor. This enables the server to continuously pour the tea, moving from cup to cup, filling each cup halfway. The server invites the guests to take in the aroma of the tea. The guests

then tip their tea into a drinking cup and the tea is drunk. It is considered a mark of respect to drink the tea in three swallows.

In the Gongfu ceremony, the tea set and all tea accessories must be elaborate and of very high quality. The first part of this ritual is allowing the guests to take in the aroma of the tea leaves to be brewed. After that, hot water is added to the teapot and cups to warm the tea set and rinse the tea leaves. That water is discarded and more water is added – this second addition of water is what the guests actually drink. The tea is poured in the cups as described above, with a continuous pour.

Taiwan (Formosa)

Taiwan, formerly Formosa, has been producing and exporting tea since 1717, when the first tea plant was thought to have been brought over from China. Some teas that are exported from Taiwan are still under the Formosa name. Bubble tea, a popular present-day beverage that includes fruit, milk and tapioca pearls, gained popularity in the North America and Europe in the 1980s and originated in Taiwan.

India

There are three main tea-producing regions in India, which export hundreds of millions of dollars worth of tea annually: Darjeeling, Assam, and Nilgiri. Tea has been used for consumption and medicinal purposes in India since at least 750 BCE. Almost all of the tea grown in India is black tea; however, there are considerable variations in the taste, texture, and aroma of these teas. Two of the most popular teas are Assam and Darjeeling, which are vastly different. A large proportion of teas from India are sold simply as "blended teas," without indication of the growing region. In general, Indian blended teas produce a strong and full-tasting brew.

In India, tea is always offered to guests upon their arrival. It is typically served with milk and sugar, and the tea is a black scented blend known as "chai." In April of 2012, the Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission declared that tea would be India's national drink beginning in April of 2013.

Sri Lanka (Ceylon)

In 1824, a tea plant from China was planted in a royal garden in Sri Lanka (then called Ceylon). It did so well that by 1873, Ceylon was exporting tea regularly.

Although Ceylon changed its name to Sri Lanka in 1972 it continues to market its teas under the Ceylon label. Over one million people in Sri Lanka are employed by the tea industry. Its mild weather and frequent rainfall make it the perfect tea producing climate. Most Ceylon teas are blends from the many estates across the island; the most famous single-site tea is Dimbula, which has a strong and bright flavor.

Kenya

Tea plantations were developed in Africa, especially in Kenya and Malawi, in the late 19th century and the early 20th century. It produces teas which are bright and strong. Many Kenyan teas are blended with other strong teas to produce the powerful blends so beloved by the British.

Japan

Japanese tea history began when Buddhist monks visiting China brought tea plants back with them. What was originally a drink of the religious sect in Japan became a beverage that was adopted by the general population in the 1600s. Japan is one of the top green tea producing countries in the world. However, a relatively small amount of Japanese teas are exported due to the land and labor costs, which are much higher than in other tea growing nations. The most popular Japanese green tea is Sencha, which is an everyday tea of the Japanese. A more distinctive (and therefore, more expensive) tea is Gyokuro, which is often reserved for guests and special events.

In Japan, an elaborate tea drinking ritual called the Chanoyu has developed over hundreds of years. The ritual goes as such: one approaches a special bamboo or wooden teahouse in a garden, walking along a path that winds through green plants, aside a gentle stream. The participant pauses at the entrance to the teahouse to establish calm, washes their hands and then, after being invited by the tea master, enters the teahouse.

In the teahouse the guests are seated on the floor encircling a small, low-lying table. The tea master hands each guest a small bowl containing Matcha, which guests receive with a bow. Each guest revolves the nearest edge of the bowl they are given towards the tea master so that the guest does not drink from the side of the bowl presented by the tea master. This is seen as a sign of respect. The guest then drinks all the tea in the bowl.

Most Japanese do not have the space available for a teahouse but will attend a tea club to give them an opportunity to be part of a tea ritual.

United Arab Emirates

As of 2009, the UAE is the highest per-capita consumer of tea in the world. They have a wealthy and diverse population; it is likely the most open and accessible Middle Eastern country to Westerners. The UAE has large numbers of people of British, Chinese, Indian, and Arab heritage, and they have all brought their tea traditions to the country.

Indonesia

Production of tea in Indonesia expanded in the years following the Second World War. Most Indonesian tea is blended, but there are a few known individual estates that trade on the world market.

Turkey

In Turkey, tea is most commonly served black. It is usually served in undersized glasses which allow the drinker to enjoy it while it's very hot. It is served with sugar cubes and is prepared for guests similarly to our basic brewing steps in Lesson 2. Boiling water is added to a small kettle (similar to a teapot) and poured over loose tea. The difference comes in the strength of the tea – in Turkey, more loose tea is added to the pot and a very strong brew is the result. Guests are able to add water if desired to get the strength they prefer and sweeten it as much or little as they like with the sugar cubes.

Russia

Tea is the most popular drink in Russia. There are two ritual methods of drinking tea in Russia. The first is to use three teapots, stacked on top of each other. Often the pots are elaborately painted with images taken from Russian folk stories. One pot contains ultra-strong black tea, another a light, herbal tea and the third is filled with hot water. People mix the contents of the three pots to taste.

The second method is to use a samovar, which is essentially a large heated urn filled with hot water. A separate pot of exceptionally strong tea is made. The tea is too strong to be drunk on its own, so hot water from the samovar is added to each individual's taste. Russian tea is often served with sweet foods such as biscuits, jams, or honey.

Other Regions

Tea is also grown in Vietnam, Korea, Russia, Nepal, Malawi, and many other countries around the world. There are even small amounts of certain tea varieties that are grown in more temperate climates such as the British Isles.

Tea History: Japanese Buddhist priests who traveled to China to study took tea leaves home with them, spreading the tea culture to Japan. The first tea bushes were planted in 49 Buddhist temples in Japan around 648 CE. The monks went on to develop elaborate tea ceremonies which remain common to this day. Tea is said to be an important part of meditation due to both the theanine and caffeine content, which stimulates and sharpens the senses while providing a sense of relaxation.

Lesson 16
Pairing with Food

I am a hardened and shameless tea drinker, who has for twenty years diluted his meals only with the infusion of this fascinating plant.
-Samuel Johnson, Writer

There is a limited range of foods that pair well with coffee, but tea is a different story. Tea is more like wine when it comes to food in that you can find a tea that goes well with almost any food. Tea that is paired with food enhances the flavors of both the tea and the meal you enjoy it with.

Breakfast

For their higher caffeine levels black tea or black tea blends, such as English Breakfast Tea and Earl Grey, are usually served with breakfast in North America and Europe.

Red Meat

Foods that we commonly associate with red wine, especially red meat, go well with the darker teas. Try pairing with black tea, pu-erh, or a darker oolong.

Poultry / Fish / Seafood

For foods that normally go well with white wine, try lighter teas. White tea is probably too light for pairing with most foods, but green tea or one of the lighter oolongs are excellent choices.

Sushi

If you eat a lot of sushi, you probably have been served green tea with it on many occasions. Green tea is a great way to start out a sushi meal, whether you plan to continue with the green tea through the whole meal or switch to sake at some point.

12 Lessons On Sushi by 27Press is an excellent resource to learn more about ordering, eating, and making the best sushi.

Tea Sandwich

This is a large category. Entire books have been written on all of the different types of tea sandwiches that are commonly associated with the English afternoon tea tradition. However, for the most part they are small, easily consumed in a few bites, and are used as light, between meal snack a few hours before dinner.

Chocolate

If you love fine chocolate, try pairing it with tea. The darker teas (black, pu-erh, and oolong) go especially well with high quality dark chocolate. Also, if you're having a chocolate tasting, with a variety of types, green tea is often used as a palate cleanser.

This is only a short list of good tea and food pairings. As mentioned at the beginning of this lesson, tea will go with almost any food. Just experiment and find out what you like. Our online resource guide includes a page of links to some very detailed food pairing recommendation articles. Access it here: **27press.com/tea**

Tea History: Around 1840, the Anna Maria Russell, the Duchess of Bedford, and a friend of Queen Victoria began to serve "afternoon tea" to her guests in her home, which became a widespread tradition among England's aristocracy. This was simply a small meal in the early afternoon that was served with tea.

Lesson 17
Tastings and Events

Wouldn't it be dreadful to live in a country where they didn't drink tea?
-Noel Coward, Playwright

There are a variety of tea-related events that you can attend, or even host in your own home, to help increase your tea knowledge. Some of the major types are listed below.

Home Tea Tastings

This involves tasting several different teas in one sitting and recording your reactions to each. Home tea tastings can be set up easily either by yourself or with friends, and with a few select teas or with an elaborate array of teas. The tasting can be done two different ways. The first is where you try one tea from each of the major types of tea (green, black, oolong, etc.). This is good if you are new to tea and not sure which kind you like best.

The second way involves trying several different styles of the same type of tea. For example, if you enjoy black teas you could taste a Darjeeling, an Assam, a China Quimen, and an English Breakfast blend. Tasting several teas within the same time period and comparing them will help to refine your palate. It's important to take good notes (discussed in the next lesson) so that you remember your thoughts about each tea later. A good number of teas to try are six (or less) so that you don't get too confused about the subtleties of each variety.

Tea Shop Tastings and Classes

Many local tea shops hold tea classes which will often offer a combination of basic tea information alongside a tasting of several different types of teas. Tea shop tastings are great because as you become familiar with the flavors of different styles of teas, there is an expert there to answer any questions you have along the way. Getting friends together for one of these tea classes is a great way to get them interested in the subject.

Tea Trade Shows

Hamburg, Las Vegas, Hong Kong, and New York are just a few of the cities that have hosted tea or tea-related trade shows recently. If you become serious about

tea, these trade shows provide an excellent opportunity to interact with other tea enthusiasts, learn more about the tea industry, find out about tea business opportunities, and taste new or rare styles of tea. Your local tea shops many also set up booths at certain community events and festivals.

Tea History: Europeans first became aware of tea from Portuguese and Dutch travelers and merchants at the end of the sixteenth century. The Dutch began to import tea from a trading station in Java and the drink quickly became fashionable. The first record of tea being imported into Britain was in 1658, but it was the marriage of Charles II to the Portuguese Catherine of Braganza in 1664 (who adored tea) that sparked Britain's love affair with the drink. Never one to miss a commercial opportunity, the East India Company began to import tea into Britain and its popularity has remained strong to this day.

Lesson 18
Taking Notes

All true tea lovers not only like their tea strong, but like it a little stronger with each year that passes.
-George Orwell, Writer

Now that you've read through this book and are well-versed in tea varieties and blends, you no doubt will start drinking different teas, trying to find your favorite brand and blend. In order to streamline your process, we recommend that you keep careful track of the teas you try, their characteristics, and whether or not you liked them. Below are some of the best methods we've found for tracking your preferences.

First, each and every tea has a unique flavor profile. To make the process of keeping track of these variations easier, you should start with the basics: indicate what brand and type of tea you are trying (black, green, white, oolong, etc.) and its country of origin. Beyond that, each type of tea has flavor variations that will assist you in honing in on your favorite. For example, black teas may taste like malt, grapes or vanilla. Green teas may taste of leeks or cocoa. White teas could taste like honey, field grasses, or dried wood.

Much like wine, you can also judge the teas you taste on sweetness and aroma. If you want to be very accurate about what you taste, you can employ a method used by wine tasters for years and do your tea tasting blind – that is, without knowledge of brand, variety, or color (of course, you will need a friend to help you with this). This allows your sense of smell and taste to do all of the judging, without any preconceptions. It is also important to make sure your teas are served at the correct temperature.

In a wine tasting process, participants typically go through five steps: color, swirl, smell, taste, and savor. You can use the same steps for your teas, recording your findings along the way. Also like wine tastings, when trying multiple teas you should start with the mildest-flavored tea first and work your way up to the strongest variety.

Templates for taking notes are provided at the end of the paperback version of this book as well as in our online resources guide. Our online resources also includes a complete list of flavor variations that you can download and print as well as links to smart phone apps to make note-taking a bit more convenient. Access the resources at:

27press.com/tea

Tea History: In 1767 the British parliament passed the Townsend Revenue Act, imposing duties on the import of tea and other goods into the American colonies. The resulting furor in the colonies led to the repeal of the Townsend Act... with the exception of the duty on tea. This led to the Boston Tea Party in 1773. Colonists dressed as Native Americans dumped hundreds of chests of tea from British trading ships into the Boston harbor. Similar "tea parties" occurred in other ports. When the British retaliated with coercive legislation, the colonists rose up in revolt and the American Revolution began. The rest, as they say, is history – the taxation of tea provided the trigger for revolution and the eventual creation of a nation.

Lesson 19
Tea and Health

Moderation in all things, including moderation.
-Petronius

Please keep in mind that the following information is not intended to be medical advice. Talk with your doctor if you have any questions about how tea may affect your health.

Caffeine

As you probably already know, caffeine exists naturally in the seeds, fruits and leaves of a large number of plants and is found in coffee, cola nuts, cocoa beans and tea leaves, it is also an additive in many soft drinks and energy drinks. It is the world's most used psychoactive drug by many people use it to improve concentration and reduce fatigue.

Most people aren't aware that with tea, caffeine is absorbed into the body is a way that is different from with coffee. The reason for the difference is disputed, but coffee provides a quick jolt of caffeine energy and then a crash back to normal energy levels, while tea provides more of a gradual rise and decline of alertness and energy. This leads some people to start their morning with a cup of coffee and then switch to tea for the rest of the day.

However, if you want to drink your favorite loose leaf tea but not consume the full amount of caffeine (before bed perhaps), here's a great tip to decaffeinate the tea yourself:

Simply steep the leaves for about 30 seconds, then pour out the liquid, and brew again with the same tea leaves. The majority of caffeine will be removed and the second brewing will contain only trace amounts of caffeine. You will sometimes hear about some highly experienced tea drinkers steeping an oolong ten times or so throughout the day and drinking each brew; this is possible without developing a major caffeine addiction because they're not ingesting a great deal of caffeine with every new brewing; just with the first one.

In large quantities caffeine can be toxic, but in moderate quantities it can have a beneficial effect. Some research has suggested that moderate amounts of caffeine may help to improve memory and may help detox the liver. Consuming too much can result in caffeine dependency accompanied by physical effects such as insomnia, headaches, heart palpitations and restlessness.

Antioxidants

In recent years, there has been considerable research into the health benefits of tea. In particular, growing evidence has been documented that tea contains antioxidants which may help the body fight a variety of diseases.

Antioxidants slow down and prevent damage to cells caused by "free radicals" (molecules which naturally occur within the body and are created by normal cellular chemical reactions (oxidation) resulting from contact with oxygen). Free radicals are also present as a result of, among other things, exposure to inhaled cigarette smoke, exposure to pollution, or too much ultraviolet sunlight. Antioxidants also stimulate the body's immune system, thereby reducing the chances of developing certain diseases and bacteriological infections.

While many foods and drinks contain antioxidants, tea contains a high proportion of one category of antioxidants known as flavonoids. Tea has one of the highest concentrations of flavonoids. These flavonoids are not a substitute for vegetables and fruit, but their antioxidant behavior has been likened to that of vegetables and fruit in a growing number of research projects.

White and green teas have the highest levels of antioxidants, while black and oolong teas have lower levels due to the oxidation process that the leaves go through.

Tea certainly has great health benefits. It's not a miracle drug, of course, but it does make an enjoyable addition to your daily routine. If you often drink soda or sugary fruit juices, try leveraging the benefits of tea by occasionally replacing those less healthy drinks with an excellent cup of freshly brewed loose leaf tea.

Tea History: When they lost their monopoly in China, the East India Company began to explore growing tea in India, a policy that continued when the British government took direct control of India. Chinese tea was a tightly guarded secret, but Britain had a plan to "steal" their tea-growing secrets: Scottish horticulturist Robert Fortune. Fortune enmeshed himself with the Chinese, wearing a fake braid, using chopsticks, and shaving the top of his head in fealty to the Emperor. He succeeded, bringing over 20,000 tea plants and all of the knowledge that went with them, to India.

Final Thoughts

Tea is drunk to forget the din of the world.
-T'ien Yiheng

Remember that when you drink tea, you are participating in a ritual that has been practiced for thousands of years. With the sheer variety and number of teas available – at least 3,000 different variations – there is certain to be a perfect tea for you. With the information in this book, you will be able to select your favorite tea and brew it properly, with maximum flavor. Let us banish forever the horror of a rapidly-cooling cup of hot water, a generic teabag, and dry wedge of lemon masquerading as a great beverage. You now know better.

You have now finished reading all nineteen lessons, but where should you go from here? This book is designed to be your first step in learning about tea and becoming an expert. As your next step, we recommend visiting our online resource guide and registering for the additional information provided there. On our website we are able provide information that is difficult to include in a book format, as mentioned throughout the text.

To access the online guide, simply visit:
27press.com/tea

Final Tip: You may now be wondering how you can retain all the information covered in this book. The main thing you need to do is to simply get out there any try a lot of different teas. You will gradually become familiar with all of the little details surrounding the different teas. However, if you really want to memorize the important information covered in this book, check out one of the many "spaced-repetition" flashcard programs available on the internet and build a flashcard deck that covers the information you want to learn; Anki (available at ankisrs.net) is probably be best one.

Online Resources

The text of this book is just the first step in what we provide to help you learn about tea. Our online resource guide includes information that are not easy to convey in written formant, including everything mentioned throughout this book, plus the downloadable PDF companion: "19 Lessons On Tea: The Complete Visual Guide."

Please visit **27press.com/tea** for our online resources.

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